

during a time of turmoil, present-day West Virginia is an emblem of peace and tranquility. Ernest W. James captured it perfectly:

There autumn hillsides are bright with scarlet trees;
And in the spring, the robins sing,
While apple blossoms whisper in the breeze
And where the sun draws rainbows in the mist
of waterfalls and mountain rills,
My heart will be always in the West Virginia hills.

So on this, West Virginia's 137th birthday, I am enormously proud to invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating this West Virginia Day.●

ALASKA RECIPIENTS OF PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING

● Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor today to congratulate three exceptional teachers in Alaska—Douglas Heetderks of Anchorage, Lura Hegg of Palmer, and Gretchen Murphy of Fairbanks. President Clinton named these Alaskans as recipients of the 1999 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This is our Nation's highest honor for mathematics and science teachers in grades K through 12.

Each year, a national panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians and educators recommends one elementary and one secondary math teacher and one elementary and one secondary science teacher from each state or territory to receive a presidential award. The 1999 recipients were selected from among 650 finalists.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House. The program was established in 1983 and is designed to recognize and reward outstanding teachers. In addition to a presidential citation and a trip to Washington, DC, each recipient's school receives a NSF grant of \$7,500 to be used under the direction of the teacher, to supplement other resources for improving science or mathematics programs in their school system.

Douglas Heetderks, Lura Hegg and Gretchen Murphy are exceptional and highly dedicated teachers. Douglas Heetderks teaches Elementary Science at Susitna Elementary in Anchorage; Lura Hegg teaches Secondary Science at Colony Middle School in Palmer; and Gretchen Murphy teaches Elementary Math at University Park Elementary School in Fairbanks. In addition to having extensive knowledge of math and science, they have demonstrated an understanding of how students learn and have the ability to engage stu-

dents, foster curiosity and generate excitement. Mr. Heetderks, Ms. Hegg, and Ms. Murphy have displayed an experimental and innovative attitude in their approach to teaching and are highly respected for their leadership.

Mr. President, our nation's future depends on today's teachers. Currently, 40 percent of America's 4th graders read below the basic level on national reading tests. On international tests, the nation's 12th graders rank last in Advanced Physics compared with students in 18 other countries. And one-third of all incoming college freshmen must enroll in a remedial reading, writing, or mathematics class before taking regular courses.

If we are to turn these dismal statistics around we are going to need more and talented teachers like Mr. Heetderks, Ms. Hegg and Ms. Murphy. I applaud them for their hard work and dedication to our children. They are educating those who will lead this country in creating, developing, and putting to work new ideas and technology.●

LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD B. BLANCK

● Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor Lieutenant General Ronald B. Blanck as he retires from the United States Army after more than thirty-two years of active duty service. For the last four years, General Blanck has served as the United States Army Surgeon General and Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command General. During his tenure, he had significant oversight of eight Department of Defense activities as well as the management of the Army's \$6.6 billion, worldwide integrated health system.

Beginning his career as a general medical officer in Vietnam, General Blanck went on to hold a variety of executive positions that include: professor and teaching chief in graduate medical education at the Uniformed Services University; medical consultant to the Army Surgeon General; Commander of Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command; and finally as the U.S. Army's 39th Surgeon General. General Blanck has met every challenge with enthusiasm and zeal. His team-building, compassion, and vision have resulted in greater cooperation among the Federal Health Services and improved delivery of medical care to our nation's military, past and present.

General Blanck guided the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) through a period of re-engineering and instituted collaborative missions with the Department of State, Department of Treasury, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, National Aeronautic and Space Admin-

istration, National Transportation and Safety Board, and the Veterans Administration. These partnerships have fostered unparalleled advances in science and facilitated the reputation of AFIP as being known as the "People's Institute."

He re-energized the Army Medical Department and instituted best business practices to ensure the provision of comprehensive, quality healthcare to service members, retired and active, and their family members. Faced with a military medical end-strength reduction of 34%, a reduction in Army medical treatment facilities of 45%, and medical force structure requirements reduction of 77%, General Blanck met the challenge. His brilliant leadership, compassionate vision and unprecedented achievements will guide the Army Medical Department and the entire federal health care system into the new millennium.

General Blanck's contributions to Persian Gulf Illness and Anthrax programs, his interactions with Congress and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), and his commitment to the delivery of world-class medical care in support of contingency operations, national emergencies, and potential weapons of mass destruction scenarios are unsurpassed. Mr. President, while General Blanck's many meritorious awards and decorations demonstrate his contributions in a tangible way, it is the legacy he leaves behind for the Army Medical Corps, the United States Army, and the Department of Defense for which we are most appreciative. It is with pride that I congratulate General Blanck on his outstanding career of exemplary service.●

PACENTRO, ITALY, REUNION 2000

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on July 2, 2000, a very special event will take place in Sterling Heights, Michigan: the first reunion of United States citizens who trace their roots back to the town of Pacentro, Italy. Over 800 people will attend the event, some of them with ancestors who immigrated to the United States over 150 years ago. In addition, the Mayor of Pacentro himself, Mr. Fernando Caparso, will be attending the event. I rise today to welcome Mr. Caparso to the State of Michigan.

Pacentro is a small town located east of Rome. It sits in the Abruzzo region in the province of L'Aquila. Born in medieval times, the town is famous for its three castle towers, the oldest of which was built by Count Boarmondo and dates back to the thirteenth century. Another dates from the fifteenth century, and is recognized as the loveliest castle in the region. More recently, Pacentro has gained fame as the birthplace of the rock star Madonna's grandparents.

Mr. Caparso was born there on February 12, 1951, to Antonio and Rosina Fabiilli. He was one of five children; three sisters remain in Pacentro and the oldest sister resides in Washington, Michigan.

After completing high school in Pacentro, Mr. Caparso graduated from Liceo Classico Ocidio in Sulmona, Italy. He followed his studies there at La Sapienza University in Rome, where he received a doctorate degree. Finally, he attended Gabriele d'Annunzio University in Chieti, where he specialized in sports medicine. Mr. Caparso is presently caring for three towns in the Abruzzo region: Secinaro, Gagliano Aterno and Castel Di Ieri.

The sport of soccer has also played a very large role in Mr. Caparso's life. While completing his studies, he always played for an amateur team in the Peligna Valley Region. And, when his playing days were behind him, he became a referee. Mr. Caparso has refereed women's major league games throughout Italy, and is currently the President of the Sulmona Referee Administration.

Mr. Caparso was elected Mayor of Pacentro in 1999. Having decided that the city needed a better administration, an administration which tended to the needs of all its citizens, he further decided to do something about it. Mr. Caparso was elected Mayor along with a list of conservative councilmen.

Mr. President, I am sure that the Pacentro, Italy, Reunion 2000 will be a wonderful success. I know that a great number of individuals have put their hearts and souls into this reunion, and I applaud their many efforts. On behalf of the entire United States Senate, I welcome Mr. Fernando Caparso, Mayor of Pacentro, Italy, to the State of Michigan.●

CAPTAIN JOSEPH P. AVVEDUTI

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise to honor Captain Joseph P. Avveduti who is retiring from the U.S. Navy in July after thirty years of outstanding service to our nation. From September 1995 to August 1996, Avveduti commanded the U.S.S. *Kalamazoo*. This ship is named after Kalamazoo, Michigan and the history of its service is of particular interest to Michigan residents.

Captain Avveduti graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1974. Following his graduation he was designated a Naval Aviator and went on to command several Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadrons. Among his many leadership positions, Captain Avveduti served as the Executive Officer of U.S.S. *Independence* from January 1993 to June 1995. In 1997, Captain Avveduti graduated from the National War College in Washington, D.C. He currently holds the Chief of Naval Operations Chair at that institution where he serves as a great role model for the

many young men and women in the Navy. During his career, Captain Avveduti received the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, three Meritorious Service Medals, the Air Medal and various campaign and service medals.

Mr. President, Captain Joseph Avveduti's service to the U.S. Navy, and in particular his command of the U.S.S. *Kalamazoo*, is to be commended. The United States will lose a respected and well accomplished naval officer upon Captain Avveduti's retirement. I know my Senate colleagues will join me in congratulating Captain Avveduti on his outstanding service.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAVID ARMAND DEKEYSER

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President. It is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to Lieutenant Colonel David A. DeKeyser for his dedicated military service to our country.

LTC DeKeyser retired on June 5, 2000 from the United States Army Reserve after serving 28 distinguished years as an officer in the Transportation Corps. I have known him well for many years and since I joined the Senate in 1997, he has served as my Chief of Staff. I came to know LTC DeKeyser personally during the 1970's and 1980's when we were both assigned to the 1184th Transportation Terminal Unit (TTU) in Mobile, Alabama. For 8 years we trained at monthly drills and annual training. We have worked with one another since that time in a series of increasingly important and difficult assignments.

LTC DeKeyser was born March 21, 1950 in Mobile, Alabama. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1972 from Auburn University. Throughout his career—with duty assignments in Europe, the United States, the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm, and most recently with duty at the United States Transportation Command—he consistently distinguished himself. During times of peace and war, in both command and staff positions, he has achieved excellence. He was activated with the 1184th TTU for duty during the Gulf War and spent 6 months away from his family in Kuwait. LTC DeKeyser was decorated with the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal. His other notable military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Medal, and two awards of the Meritorious Service Medal.

LTC DeKeyser's professionalism and leadership as a military officer earned him the respect and admiration of his soldiers, fellow officers, and members of the U.S. Congress. No officer was better liked or respected—from the newest private to the commanding officer—than LTC DeKeyser. He is known for his integrity, compassion, humor, and ability to inspire men and women

from all walks of life. These are the qualities of a soldier who deserves the thanks of a grateful nation for a job well done. In addition, he made notable contributions in his community as a member of various civic organizations to include the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the Alabama Coastal Resources Advisory Council, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the Alabama-Mississippi Sea Grant Consortium Advisory Committee, Goodwill Industries Board of Directors, the American Heart Association Board of Directors, the Mobile Jaycees, and the Reserve Officers Association.

Armand has served his country for 28 years in the Army but he has also provided magnificent services to the Nation in a number of other crucial government assignments.

I know about these because we are partners. In the 1980's, I asked him to leave his business career to serve as a law enforcement coordinator for the office of the United States Attorney. As was typical of Armand's nature he eagerly looked to expand our work and we decided to initiate a "Weed and Seed" program in an attempt to revitalize the Martin Luther King area of Mobile.

This historic neighborhood had fallen victim to decay, crime and drugs. Working with our other law enforcement coordinator, Eric Day, Armand gave himself to the project with his typical enthusiasm. Mr. President, I can say that the program was a great success. I once told Armand, when they put you in the grave, your work to make this neighborhood a much better place may be your greatest accomplishment.

Later in 1994, I was elected Attorney General of Alabama and I asked him to leave his beloved Mobile to come to Montgomery to serve as my Administrative Officer.

When we took office, we faced a huge financial problem as a result of terrible financial management. Armand responded with great effectiveness—closing several off-site offices, disposing of one-half of the office automobiles, reducing staff, and helping us reorganize. Personnel was reduced by one-third and legal work improved.

Then, when I was elected to the U.S. Senate, I asked him to serve as my Chief of Staff. Once again, he agreed. He has done a magnificent job and there can be no doubt that his military service has played a key role in helping our office achieve the high level of effectiveness that we currently enjoy.

Armand is a soldier's soldier. He has given his best to the Army. It has caused him to be away from home and family and called for personal sacrifice. But, for 28 years, he has answered the call and served with great distinction.

I salute Armand for his faithfulness to the nation, and wish him, his wonderful wife Beverly, and sons David and